

# A Campaign for Decency.

*BY HARTLEY DAVIS.*

THE PRESENT EFFORT IN NEW YORK TO OVERTHROW THE TREMENDOUS POWER OF TAMMANY AND TO MAKE THE CONDUCT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS A MATTER OF BUSINESS INSTEAD OF POLITICS—THE RIVAL FORCES IN THE FIELD, AND THE OBSTACLES THAT CONFRONT THE REFORMERS.

THE experiment of attempting to make a municipal election a matter of business, rather than of politics, gives more than local importance to the campaign in New York which ends with the election on November 5. It is the first time such a thing has reached a test in the second largest and worst governed city in the world.

First is the determination to overthrow Tammany Hall, which, from the criterion of results, is the most perfect organization ever known, except the peerless Catholic Church. And while Tammany is peculiar to New York, it typifies evils which sooner or later, in greater or less degree, must confront every large city in the country, and which already have shown themselves in many smaller ones.

Municipal corruption manifests itself in a hundred ways, but its genesis is always in the desire of the individual to use political power and political office to make money. The success of the manipulators depends upon their skill and the indifference of the general public.

Tammany Hall is worse today than it has been at any time during its long career. Since it was returned to power four years ago it has been plunging along in an orgy of loot and blackmail. Even the lowliest of those in a position to do so have stretched forth feeble hands to clutch the drops of blood money. It is not my purpose to set forth here the iniquities of Tammany. This brief reference to the evils that have prevailed is necessary, because it has made possible

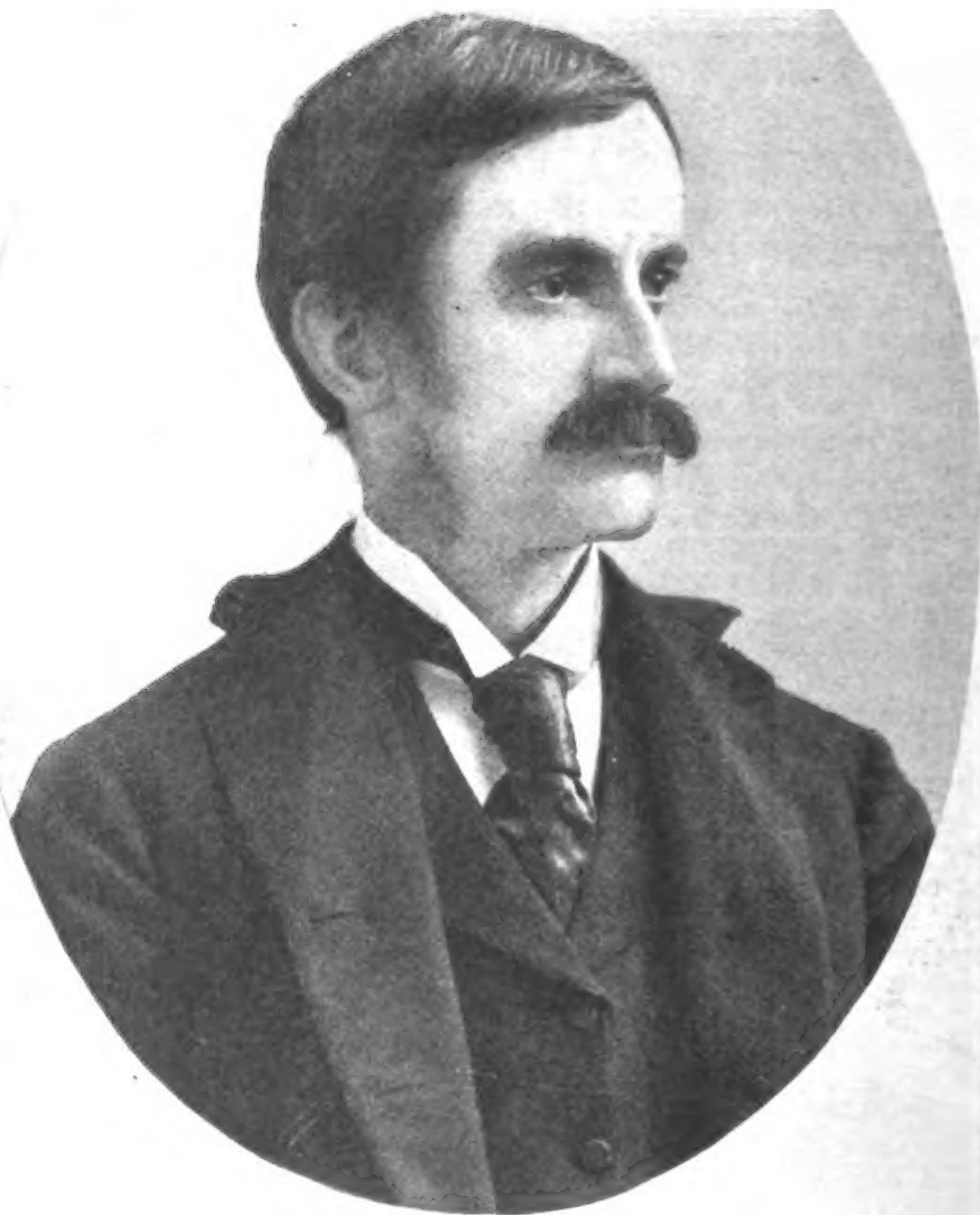


EDWARD M. GROUT, OF BROOKLYN, DEMOCRAT;  
CANDIDATE FOR COMPTROLLER ON THE  
FUSION TICKET.



W. TRAVERS JEROME, THE "RAIDING MAGISTRATE,"  
ANTI TAMMANY CANDIDATE FOR DISTRICT  
ATTORNEY.





EDWARD M. SHEPARD, WHO IN 1897 CALLED TAMMANY HALL "THE MOST BURNING AND DISGRACEFUL BLOT ON THE MUNICIPAL HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY," AND WHO IN 1901 IS THE TAMMANY CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF NEW YORK.

*From a photograph by Pearsall, Brooklyn.*

the present concerted movement to overthrow the rule of the organization.

#### THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION IN NEW YORK.

The object of those who are at the head of this campaign for decency is not to defeat Tammany alone, but to shatter the Tammany system. They want to divorce politics from municipal affairs. They propose to elect the officials of the city as they would elect officials of a great manufacturing corporation; they desire them selected because of their fitness and capacity, and not because of

their views on the tariff, the currency, or the Isthmian canal. It is a fine theory, a noble ambition, and it deserves success. The chief weakness of their campaign lies in the fact that these men are fighting for a principle rather than for results, while the allies they must call to their aid care only for results. Of course the body that is at the head of the movement, the Citizens' Union, wants results, too; but it thinks that they will come about through the recognition of the principle.

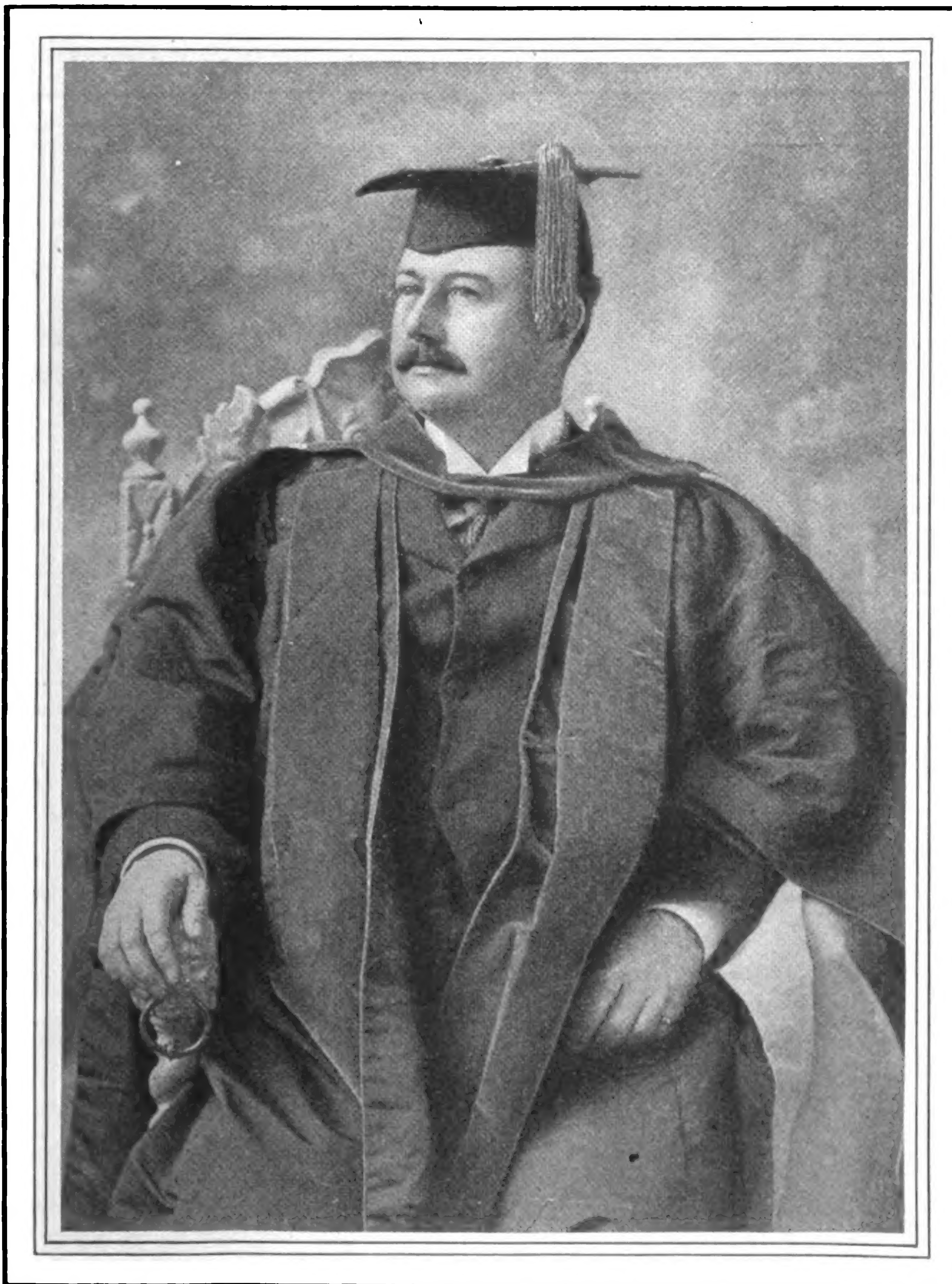
It has taken many years to bring about



conditions which permitted a test of the theory. The real foundation was laid in 1894, when the constitutional convention so arranged elections that municipal offi-

necessary for opponents of Tammany to get together and oust it from control.

The question most often put to a New Yorker when city government is dis-



SETH LOW IN HIS ROBES AS PRESIDENT OF COLUMBIA, FROM WHICH OFFICE HE RESIGNED TO BECOME THE FUSION CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF NEW YORK. MR. LOW IS AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN.

*From a photograph by Pach, New York.*

cers are chosen in off years—that is, when there is neither a State nor a national election. Those unfamiliar with the facts might naturally suppose that, when this went into effect, it would only be

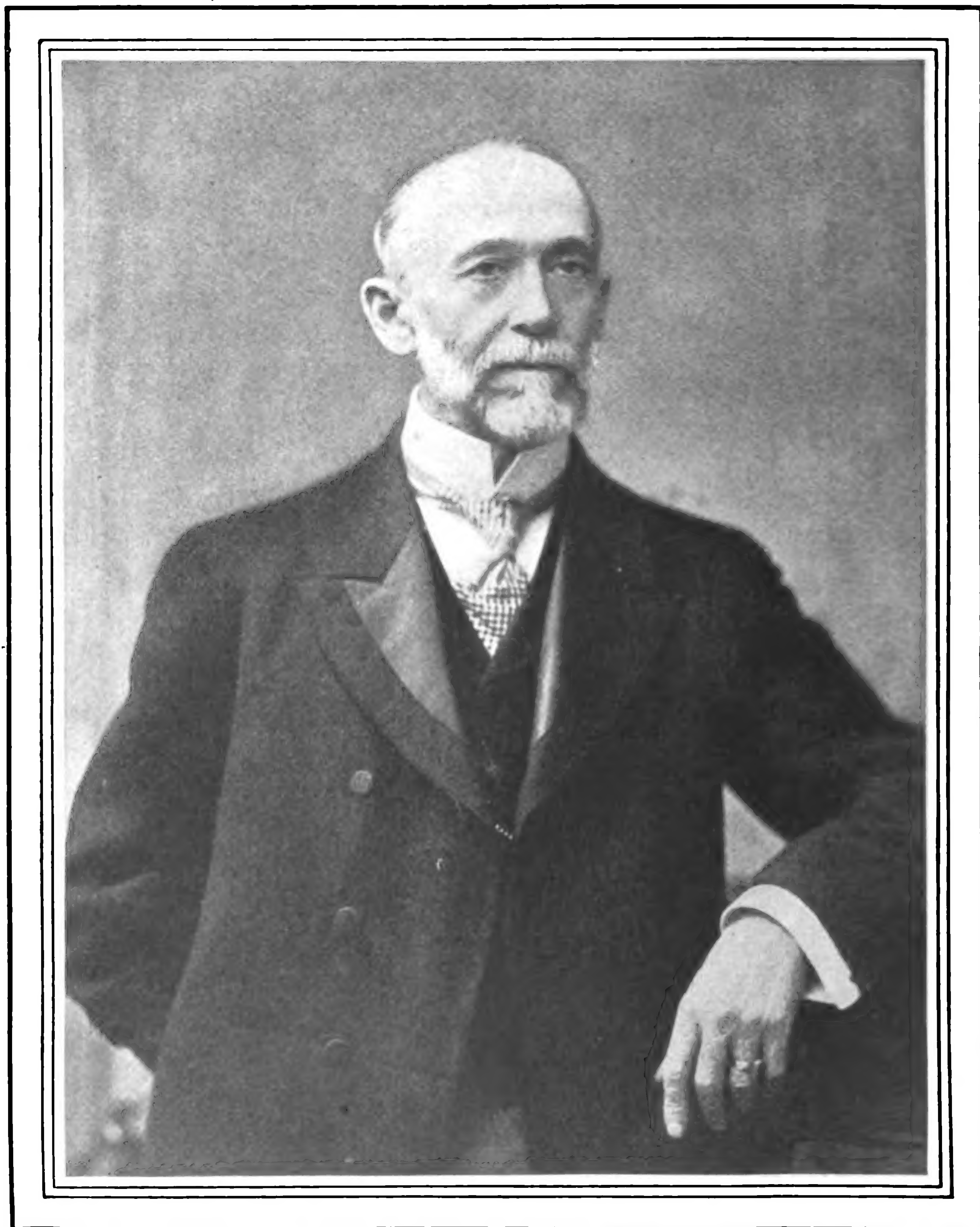
cussed by men who know Tammany by hearsay only, is this:

“Are there not enough decent people in your city to overthrow Tammany and demolish it?”



And while the New Yorker feels the sting and answers, hotly or patronizingly, according to his temperament, he says in effect the same thing: "The honest, respectable people are bound hand and foot by a system that has been growing for a hundred years, and to defeat Tammany

of least resistance. It is easier to endure many uncomfortable things than to fight and make away with them, and then to keep vigilant watch to prevent their re-growing. So long as Tammany does not interfere with the peace loving, self respecting man—and it is reasonably care-



UNITED STATES SENATOR THOMAS C. PLATT, THE LEADER OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN THE CITY AS WELL AS THE STATE OF NEW YORK, WHO IS SUPPORTING MR. LOW FOR MAYOR.

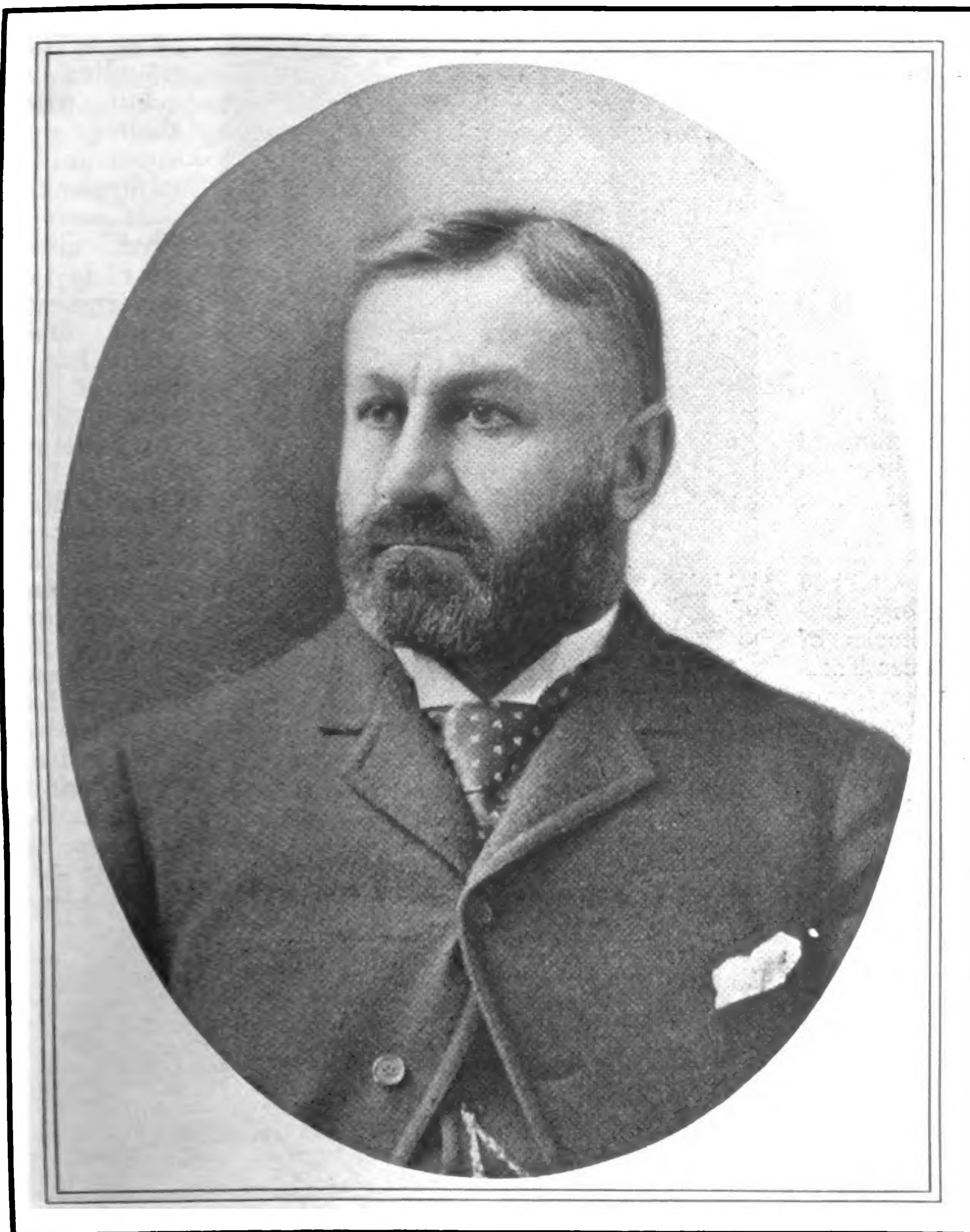
*From a copyrighted photograph by Dupont, New York.*

it is necessary to resort to methods no decent man cares to employ." He knows in his inmost soul that the security of Tammany lies in the indifference of the respectable element.

Human nature moves along the lines

ful about this—he takes only a languid interest in the blackmailing of disorderly houses, the fostering of gambling places, and the protection of dives. He is prepared to believe that the stories about the countenancing of the traffic in young





RICHARD CROKER, THE SUPREME BOSS OF TAMMANY HALL, WHO DICTATES TO THE ORGANIZATION THE MEN TO BE ELECTED TO THE VARIOUS OFFICES.

*From a photograph by Pach, New York.*

girls are exaggerated. He consoles himself with the specious thought that only those who break the laws and the social code are the sufferers, and they receive only what they deserve.

Now and then there comes a great awakening of the public conscience, and the people are quickened into action. A flood of indignant votes sweeps corrupt officials out of office, and apparently buries Tammany beyond hope of resurrection. The public conscience is mighty in its wrathful enthusiasm, but it is woefully deficient in staying power. It accomplishes great things in a rush, and

then it goes comfortably and virtuously to sleep. And after each awakening it is increasingly difficult to arouse it from the lethargy that follows.

#### THE TREMENDOUS STRENGTH OF TAMMANY.

Tammany never sleeps, never gives up. After defeat it digs itself out of the débris and straightway sets about repairing the damage to the machine. Its business is to control the city government. To do this it must have votes. The difference between Tammany and the reformers is the difference between the professional and the amateur. Tam-



many knows that the public conscience will go to sleep. It knows that it lacks constructive capacity, that it will not prepare for the next election.

Under ordinary conditions, there is no possibility of defeating Tammany along the usual political lines. It has a hundred and ten thousand votes on which it can depend in any emergency. These votes are attached to the organization by hooks of steel, because Tammany takes care of them by night and by day. It does not feed the dwellers in tenements as they are



STATE SENATOR TIMOTHY D. (DRY DOLLAR) SULLIVAN,  
THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE TAMMANY  
DISTRICT LEADERS.

fed by the reformers—with high sounding principles—but with food, shelter, work, and opportunities for enjoyment.

It costs a hundred millions a year to run the government of New York, and Tammany has the control of that vast sum. There are forty thousand office holders in Greater New York, including school teachers and policemen, and Tammany practically controls them all. At the head of the organization is a great leader. Richard Croker is one of the strong men of the earth, strong as were the first



COMPTROLLER BIRD S. COLER, WHOM MR. CROKER  
REFUSED TO NOMINATE FOR MAYOR, DESPITE  
THE WISHES OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

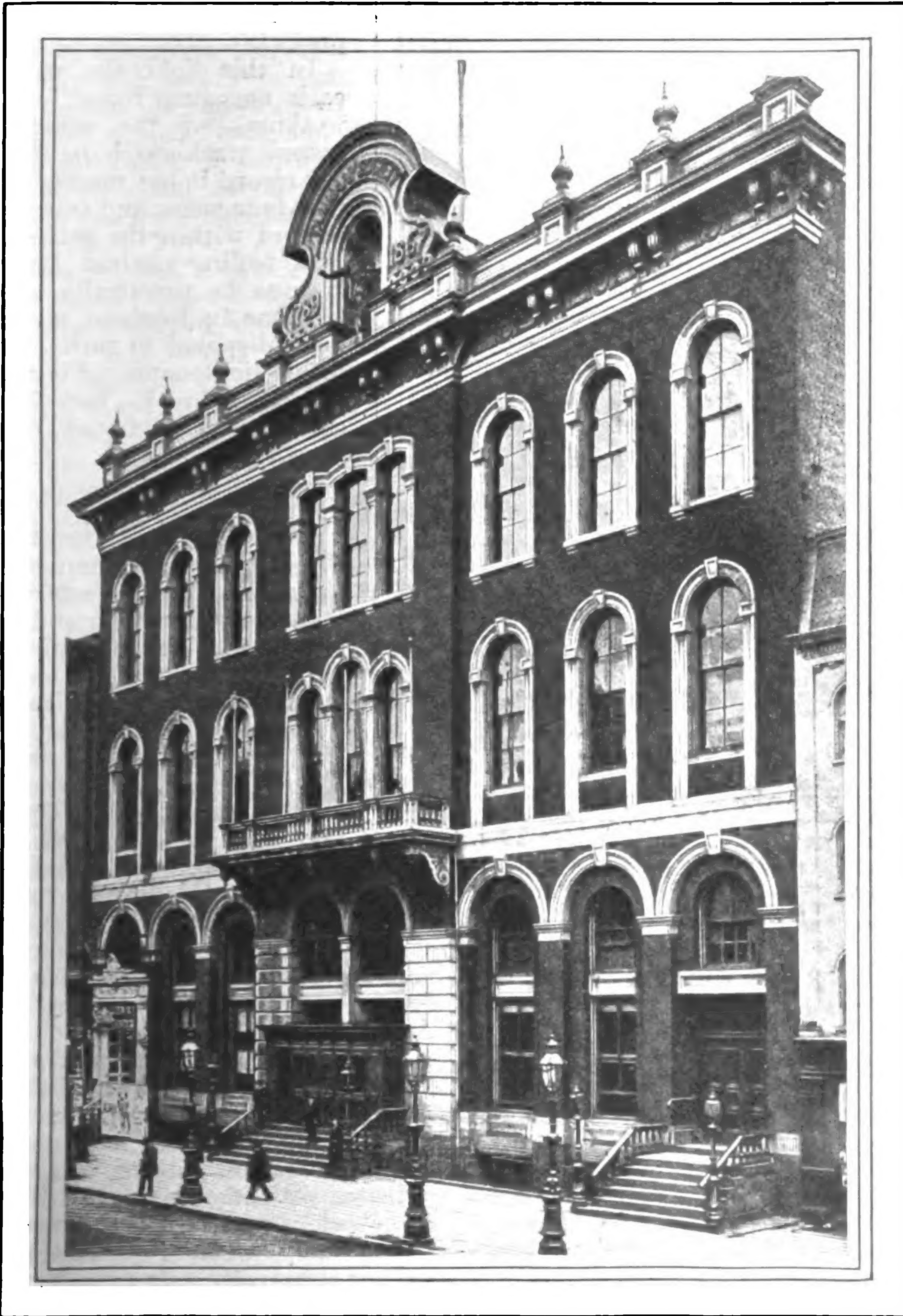


CORPORATION COUNSEL JOHN WHALEN, ONE OF  
MR. CROKER'S WARM PERSONAL FRIENDS  
AND CLOSE POLITICAL ADVISERS.



kings of a primitive people. He rules New York from his quiet country home in England because there is no man in Manhattan comparable with him in strength who will give his time and

creased, the working hours lengthened—that is all. As a rule, there are opposed to it half a dozen loosely knit factions, each bitterly hostile to the other. What chance have they to defeat Mr. Croker's



TAMMANY HALL, FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS THE WIGWAM, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ORGANIZATION, FROM WHICH ITS CAMPAIGNS ARE CONDUCTED.

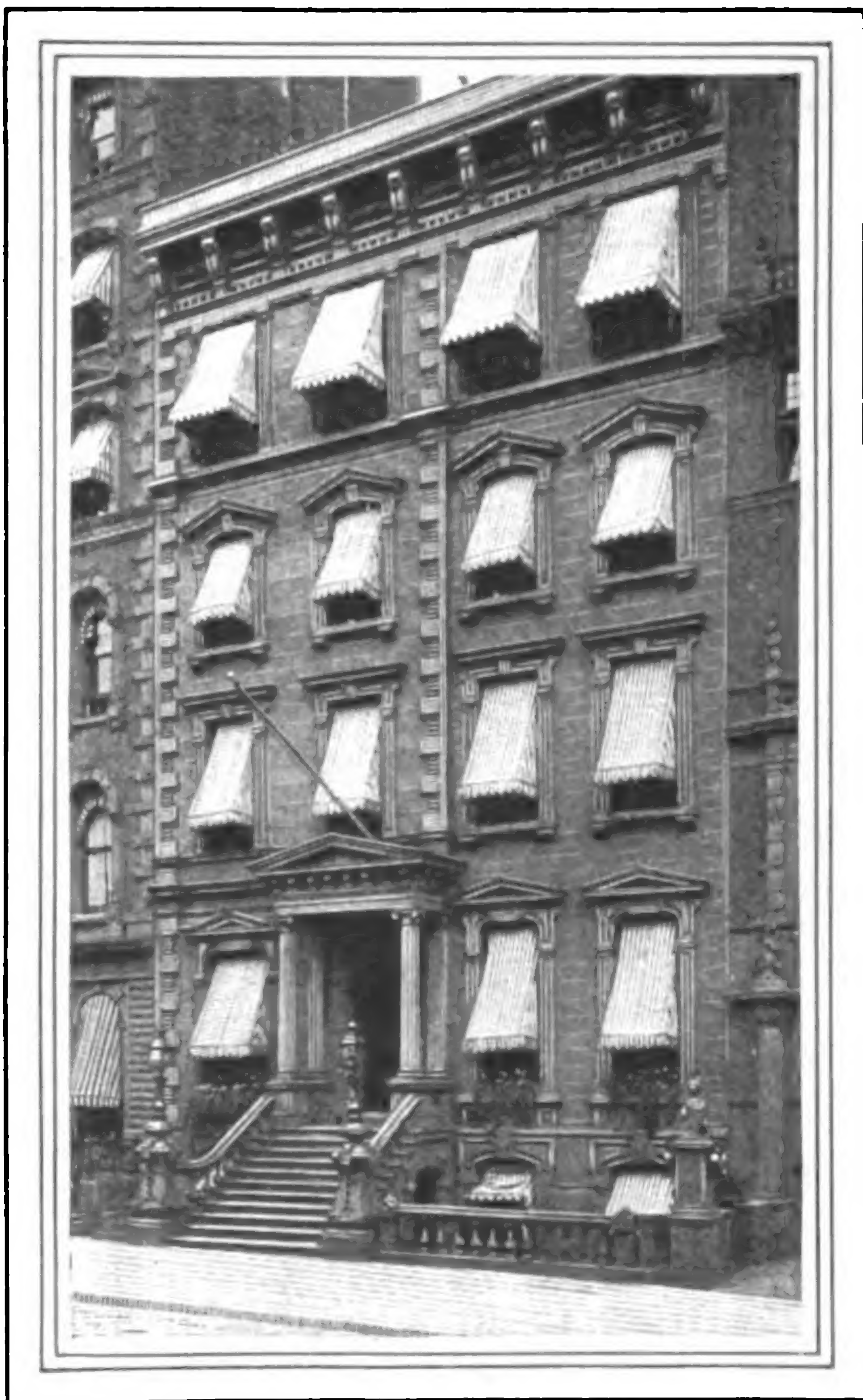
energy and thought to controlling the municipal government.

Usually Tammany counts on carrying New York by sixty or seventy thousand votes. Its machine is always in running order. At election time the speed is in-

perfectly organized, thoroughly disciplined forces that fight enthusiastically at his very nod? It is the difference between an army of veterans and an uncontrolled mob.

The mob is mighty only when the pub-





EXTERIOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC CLUB ON FIFTH AVENUE, WHERE MR. CROKER MAKES HIS HOME, AND WHICH IS THE GATHERING PLACE OF TAMMANY LEADERS IN THE EVENING.

lie conscience rises in its majesty. But even the public conscience must have a leader to point the way; and it is the most thankless job in the world. Witness the fate of Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, who was the head and front of the uprising of 1893, the greatest in the history of the city—a good man, a mighty crusader, brave beyond words, determined as fate. He won his fight, and what was his reward? Today the mention of his name is more often accompanied with a shrug of the shoulders than with respect. Is it any wonder that when he was asked if he would again take up the struggle against Sodom and Gomorrah, he said: "Let them stew awhile in their own iniquity; it will do them good!"

If the public conscience is awakened in the present campaign, then Tammany will be defeated; if not, Tammany is likely to win. There have been laid bare

during the past year evidences of corruption and depravity unspeakable, but up to the opening of the campaign they made scarcely a ripple. What will be accomplished in the month before election I would not dare venture to predict.

In this fight the strength of each opposing force lies in the weakness of the other. Tammany's weakness is in the frightful record it has made during the past four years, and in an unusual discord within the ranks. There is a feeling against Mr. Croker because he practically spends all his time in England, and because he is disposed to turn a deaf ear to his lieutenants. There will be no open break, because he is stronger than all of them put together.

#### WHAT THE CITIZENS' UNION IS.

The head and front of the forces opposing Tammany is the Citizens' Union, controlled by men of great wealth and high position, who are actuated by the purest motives. It is made up of members of both political parties. Its most active leader is R. Fulton Cutting, the head of one of the oldest, richest, and most distinguished families in New York, a man with a lofty sense of civic duty, whose great philanthropy is broad and sincerely altruistic. George Haven Putnam, head of the Putnam publishing firm, is

another of its active spirits; another is James C. Carter, called the leader of the American bar.

The Citizens' Union is not a political party, and although it has district organizations along Tammany lines, it has no machine. The leaders are not experienced in practical politics, and have little patience with its ways. The Union has no cohesion, no internal strength. It is strong only when its candidates are strong; it is really only a nucleus to rally the best influences in the community. Heretofore, it has been devoted to principle and opposed to compromise, and the result was, four years ago, when it undertook to elect a successor to Mayor Strong, it was defeated, although it worked with great vigor, and had so much money that it refused to receive more contributions.

At the outset of the campaign of 1897.



the Citizens' Union made it understood that it didn't think much more of the Republicans, so far as the city was concerned, than it did of Tammany Hall. Actuated by the purest motives, and after long deliberation, it selected Seth Low, president of Columbia University, as a non partisan and anti Tammany candidate for mayor. If the Citizens' Union had exercised a little tact, and Senator Platt and his followers had not been so determined to stand on their dignity, Seth Low would have been the first mayor of Greater New York. As it was, the Republicans refused to accept Mr. Low and nominated General Benjamin F. Tracy. The combined vote of Low and Tracy was about twenty five thousand more than the vote of Robert A. Van Wyck, the Tammany candidate.

This year the evil that Tammany has wrought has brought the warring elements together, and the interval has taught much needed lessons. Whether the Citizens' Union has fully realized that "life is a series of compromises," and that there are times when unbending adherence to an abstract principle becomes a practical crime, remains to be seen; but they started in a much more reasonable way.

#### SETH LOW AND HIS SUPPORTERS.

Seth Low is again the candidate for mayor. He was named by the Citizens' Union. He comes of an old, distinguished, and rich family. Not a shadow has ever been cast upon his reputation. He has been so upright that at times he has been accused of bending backwards. His grandfather was the first mayor of Brooklyn, and the family has always been a public spirited one.

Mr. Low was graduated from Columbia at the head of his class when he was twenty years old. In 1881, when he was only thirty one, he was elected mayor of Brooklyn on a non partisan ticket. His was purely a business administration, characterized by great good sense. He was reflected, and a brilliant public career seemed to open before him. He had been an earnest Republican, but when the Governorship of New York was almost within his grasp he left his party because he was not in sympathy with its tariff policy. It was purely a matter of principle with Mr. Low.

When he was chosen president of Columbia University in 1889, it was regarded as a remarkable innovation. Never before had a business man been made the head of an important institution of

learning. But he has been wonderfully successful, and has made Columbia a great modern university. He gave to it a library that cost a million dollars, and raised very large sums of money for other buildings.

Mr. Low has always found time to devote to municipal matters as a matter of duty. He is, therefore, an ideal candidate for mayor from the viewpoint of the Citizens' Union—a man of the highest character, of business training, of tried capacity and experience, who has proved that he would sacrifice any political ambition to a principle.

Never since the world began was a candidate supported by such diverse elements, and the fact that it is necessary to bring them together shows how difficult is the task of overturning Tammany Hall. I have already given some idea of the nature of the Citizens' Union. Next in importance come the Republicans, who polled about fifty six thousand votes in Manhattan and thirty six thousand in Brooklyn for General Tracy four years ago. This is about the dependable Republican vote. In certain districts, normally Republican, there is a reasonably effective organization, but for the most part the Republican machinery in Manhattan is pretty shaky.

There are no fewer than four distinct German American reform organizations, each having a cause of quarrel with the others, but all hating Tammany, and also demanding Sunday beer and the abolition of "blue laws." These were inclined to shy at Mr. Low, as they did four years ago, because of his temperance convictions, although when he was mayor of Brooklyn he handled the excise question with discretion and common sense.

There are two Democratic organizations in the anti Tammany movement. One is known as the City Democracy, and its leader is James O'Brien, who was an honest sheriff under Tweed, and who hates Tammany with enthusiasm. His following is almost purely personal. The other organization, known officially as the Manhattan Democracy, and colloquially as the Sheehanites, is a faction that seceded from Tammany Hall a year or so ago. John C. Sheehan was a lifelong member of Tammany. When Mr. Croker went to Europe after the landslide in 1893, he made Sheehan the leader in his absence, and the latter rallied the disorganized forces. He had enough district leaders pledged to oust Croker, and he could have done so had he not lacked courage. But he failed at the critical



point, and the big boss drove Sheehan out of Tammany.

The fact that the Citizens' Union is willing to admit the Sheehanites to conferences, and has even named one of them as a candidate for the important office of President of the Borough of Bronx, is a most hopeful sign, because it indicates that the men who lead the Union realize the necessities of compromise in increasing their voting strength.

If Tammany is defeated, what then? If conclusions are drawn from precedents, it will be back in power in a few years, because the public conscience longs for the peace of sleep, while Tammany has an undying thirst for the spoils of office. The only hope is to build up an organization practically as strong as Tammany. In an article in *MUNSEY'S* for October, 1900, I wrote:

One blunder that has been made by all the opponents of Tammany Hall is their belief that the organization is corrupt from beginning to end, and without a single redeeming feature. No system wholly evil and iniquitous could endure for a hundred years. As a matter of fact, Tammany Hall does more for the personal comfort, happiness, and well being of the average tenement dweller than all the charitable institutions in New York.

It is not true that Tammany is uplifting the people of the metropolis. It is not true that it is making them better men and women. But it is true that in relieving distress, in providing for daily wants, in furthering ambitions, in helping men out of their troubles and assisting them to get on in the world, Tammany does a wonderful work.

That is as true now as it was then. The reform organizations want voters at election time; during the remainder of the year, or two years, they feed them on political economy pap, or leave them altogether alone.

#### IN ORGANIZATION IS STRENGTH.

Two men have proved that an organization can be built up in New York along Tammany lines and without the aid of patronage.

Captain F. Norton Goddard is a young man who has increased the wealth his father left him until he is credited with an income of eighty thousand dollars a year. He has a family to which he is devoted, and his tastes are such that he was happy far beyond the run of men. One of his employees stole a large sum of money, and Captain Goddard learned that he had gambled it away in policy. Captain Goddard forgave his clerk, and started to prosecute the policy dealer. He ran up against the police, and learned things that startled him. He showed his fighting quality by convicting the policy dealer despite the police, and his gener-

osity by taking care of the gambler's family while the man was in jail.

Captain Goddard thought things over, and concluded that it was his duty to enter politics. He did so in his own Assembly district, a Tammany stronghold. He was laughed at as "the rich dude in politics," but he worked and planned. The Republican leaders opposed him bitterly. He defeated them, even "Lightning Jim" Stewart, whose sobriquet was won in political fights. He built a fine working man's club, and established a political club besides. He has cared for the people of his district as if they were his children, not because he wants political honor, but because he wants to make people happier and better, and because he believes that a good city government is necessary to this end. The young man has made the old time politicians open their eyes.

It will be said, and naturally, that Captain Goddard can do this because he is a millionaire. This is not true of Charles S. Adler. In the heart of the down town east side is the eighth Assembly district, of which the Tammany leader is Martin Engel, a millionaire butcher. It is one of the strongholds of Senator "Dry Dollar" Sullivan, the strongest man in the Tammany organization next to Croker. Adler has won that district for himself. He is a poor man. His income does not equal two thousand dollars a year, and this fact is the best proof of his honesty, for he is a member of the Assembly. Adler has gained his victory by looking after the people in his district. Night and day he is at their beck and call. He is their servant, their adviser, their friend, their father. He has neither offices nor money to give them, but he gives all he has, and he has won the people from Tammany.

Not long ago there was a fight for the Tammany leadership in the second district, at the lower end of Manhattan Island. The primaries opened at noon. It was reported that one faction purposed getting in line and keeping the other side from voting. The news reached one of the leaders at midnight. He despatched messengers to his followers, calling them from their beds, from the saloons, from work. He placed them in line before the polling place at two o'clock in the morning, and there they stood until the following noon, when the polls opened. That is the devotion that can be inspired in followers by a leader who looks to the human side and does not place all his strength in principles.